

§ 143-162.1. First menu operator access.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

- (1) Some telephone systems operated by State government agencies require callers to proceed through several menus to finally reach an individual extension, an arrangement that can be intimidating to the caller;
- (2) Many State telephone systems also make it difficult to reach an attendant or operator at the agency; and
- (3) While automated telephone systems and voice mail are intended to improve the efficiency of government, the first duty of government is to serve the people, and efficiency should not impede the average citizen in attempting to contact a State agency for service or information.

(b) State agency telephone systems routing calls to multiple extensions shall be reprogrammed by September 1, 1997, to minimize the number of menus that a caller must go through to reach the desired extension, and to allow the caller to reach an attendant or operator after accessing not more than two menus from the first menu when calling during normal business hours. As used in this section, the term "menu" refers to the first point in the call at which the caller is asked to choose from two or more options, regardless of whether that choice is referred to as a menu, router, or other term within the telephone industry itself.

This act shall be implemented by State agencies with existing personnel at no additional cost to the State.

(c) All State agencies shall include the agency's telephone number or numbers in a prominent place on all agency letterhead.

(d) The provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to any "511" traveler information system operated by the Department of Transportation. (1997-351, ss. 1, 2; 1999-429, ss. 1, 2; 2003-184, s. 4.)